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ABSTRACT

This final report discusses the activities and outcomes of the Wisconsin FACETS program, a program that provides parent information and training services for underserved parents and caretakers of infants, toddlers, children, and young adults with disabilities who live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The goals of the program are provided, along with a description of the progress the program made on individual objectives to reach the goals. Outcomes of the program include: (1) the creation of parent support groups to serve 326 parents/caregivers from diverse backgrounds and a parent resource library; (2) the modeling of effective communication techniques with every training and consultation with families; (3) the provision of parent training to 530 parents/caregivers on how to fully participate in the decision making process and development of Individualized Education Programs and Individualized Family Service Plans; (4) parent training for 328 parents/caregivers on the basic provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), early intervention, and transition; (5) distribution of information to 12,192 parents and professionals regarding IDEA and related disability issues; (6) creation of a collaborative relationship with key area organizations on school reform; and (7) provision of individual consultation and follow-up support to 1,630 families. (CR)

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Wisconsin FACETS Community Parent Resource Center.
Monitoring Period – 10/1/1998 – 09/30/2001
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Final Project Report
10/1/98 - 9/30/01

Project Summary

WI FACETS provides parent information and training services for underserved parents and caretakers of infants, toddlers, children and young adults with disabilities who live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by:

- Providing information and support through monthly support group meetings for 120 families.
- Promoting effective communication and collaboration between parents and educators.
- Providing training and support to 306 families annually on the basic provisions of IDEA, IEPs and other related topics.
- Disseminating information to a minimum of 2500 parents, professionals and other individuals annually regarding IDEA, disability issues and related topics.
- Providing information and assistance annually to 2400 parents and other individuals.
- Providing information and resources regarding school reform as it relates to children with disabilities.
- Providing support to families for the educational programs of their children with disabilities.

NATURE OF TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE	3 YEAR PROJECTION	ACTUAL	PERCENT ABOVE (BELOW) PROJECTION
MONTHLY GROUP	360	326	(9.44%)
PRESERVICE & INSERVICE	60	116	93.33%
TRAINING	924	1,725	86.69%
INFORMATION & REFERAL	8,200	6,725	(17.99%)
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	8,150	12,192	49.60%
PARENT LEADERS	15	14	(6.67%)
INDIVIDUAL ASSSISTANCE	225	326	44.89%
TOTAL	17,934	21,424	19.46%

EC 309068

Project Status

Goal #1. Better understand the nature of their children's disabilities and their educational and developmental needs.

Objective 1.1 To provide an arena for support and information sharing to empower parents of children with disabilities.

A total of *326 parents/caregivers* participated in our support groups. With collaboration with Omatayo, a Milwaukee based-group of African American parents/caregivers of children with special needs, monthly meetings are held at our office. In year 2 of the grant, we collaborated with United Cerebral Palsy and Parent Education Project to jointly support a group for Latino families. This support group is held in Spanish and meet at Esperanza Unida, a community agency located in the heart of Latino neighborhoods. This lead to our hiring Monica Lopez, a Latina mother of two children with disabilities. While the main focus of the support groups dealt with IDEA and the educational and developmental needs of their children, additional information such as the following was shared: respite care, food stamps, welfare issues, health care, Milwaukee resources, early childhood information, family support program, long term redesign, SSI, etc.

Objective 1.2. To provide access to a variety of resources related to children with disabilities and other disability issues.

Thirty eight items were obtained or purchased for our library for use by parents. They include such items as *Children with Autism: A Parents' Guide, The Complete Learning Disabilities Directory, Children with Traumatic Brain Injury: A Parents' Guide,* etc. We have learned that many of parents prefer video format for materials. Consequently we continually search for culturally relevant videos for our families. In addition, we are making a particular effort to purchase materials in Spanish as well as Hmong.

Goal #2. Communicate more effectively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention and related services.

Objective 2.1 To present and model strategies for effective communication.

Every workshop has information related to communication. Staff model and reinforce effective communication techniques with every training and consultation with families. However, a separate stand alone workshop on communication skills has been added to our list of available workshops.

Objective 2.2 To present inservice/preservice to 20 professionals annually on the importance of parent/professional partnerships.

During our three grant, 116 professionals received inservice/preservices from FACETS. WE have presented to educators at Cardinal Stritch University as well as University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We have also presented to professionals at Rosalie Manor, a contracted agency for Parents plus, a Goals 2000 project. This goal has been met.

Objective 2.3 To participate on various state and local tasks forces, committees, etc. for participation to offer the parent perspective.

FACETS's staff are involved in the following task forces, committees, board and policy making committees to offer the parent perspective, as well as representing diverse cultures:

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council
Milwaukee Public Schools Task Force on Special Education*
State Superintendent's Council on Special Education *
Wisconsin Respite Association
Wisconsin Children's Redesigning Long Term Health Care *
Milwaukee Public School Parent Advisory Committee*
Waisman Center AAPALS (African American Parents as Leaders)
Healthy Transition Project
Quality Education Coalition *
Milwaukee Public Schools Discipline Committee
HealthWatch
CAP Network
SCOPE

* Committees and task forces where parents are being supported by FACETS staff.

Goal #3. Participate fully in the decision making process and the development of individualized education programs (IEPS) and individualized family service plans (IFSPs).

Objective 3.1 To provide training to 112 parents per year on how to develop IEPs and IFSPs.

During the three years of this project, 539 parents/caregivers received training on how to fully participate in the decision making process and the development of individualized education programs (IEPS) and individualized family service plans (IFSPs). Of that number, 96 parents participated in training on how to develop IFSPs. We have learned that with some of our families, trainings need to be presented in just

short bits of information with much discussion and use of visuals. For example, an entire one hour training may revolve on what it means to give consent for evaluations. This goal has been met.

Objective 3.2 To present strategies for effective decision making and problem solving in every workshop presented.

Every workshop includes material on decision making and problem solving. Time is taken at each training to help the parent formulate effective and positive strategies for problem solving.

Objective 3.3 To provide printed material on how to develop IEPS and IFSPs.

During the three years of this project, WI FACETS purchased and made available to parents several resources regarding IEPs, such as: *El IEP*, a video, *Individual Education Plan: Involved Effective Parents, The Answer Book on Transportation,* etc. Again, we are searching for translated materials and videos.

Objective 3.4 To provide technical assistance and follow-up support to families regarding the development of their child's IEP or IFSP.

During the three years of this project, 326 families/caregivers received technical assistance and follow-up support regarding the development of their child's IEP or IFSP. This included going to IEP meetings with the parent, reviewing their child's IEP and offering suggestions, follow-up support regarding implementation of their child's IEP, access to resources regarding IEPs. This goal has been met.

Goal #4. Understand the provisions of the Act for the education of, and the provision of early intervention services, including the provision of mediation, to children with disabilities.

Objective 4.1 To provide training for 80 parents annually on the basic provisions of IDEA, early intervention and transition.

During the three years of this project, 328 parents/caregivers received training on the basic provisions of IDEA, early intervention and transition. This goal has been met.

Objective 4.2 To provide training to 80 parents annually on a variety of topics related to disability awareness, ie: Section 504, Transition to Adulthood, Leadership Skills, etc.

During the three years of this project, 710 parents/caregivers received training on a

variety of topics related to disability awareness. this included workshops on Parenting Strategies, Discipline & Schools, Leadership Skills, Transition and Waiting Lists, etc.

A two hour workshop was developed and piloted during the three year grant. The Alliance training on Positive Behavioral Interventions provided the framework, however we found it necessary to revise the Alliance training in order to better meet the needs of our parents. With assistance from Milwaukee Catalyst, a workshop on school reform was developed, but it needs additional work along with developing visuals. This workshop should be completed in 2002.

Objective 4.3 To provide training to 36 parents annually on the use of Mediation.

During the three years of this project, 148 parents/caregivers were trained on the use of Mediation. With collaboration from the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System (WSEMS) of which WI FACETS is one of three partners, the following materials were purchased for use by parents and professionals: *Laws Affecting Children with Special Needs, Developing IEPS Under the New IDEA, Serving Private School Students Under the New IDEA*, etc.

Objective 4.4 To provide information about IDEA and project services to community service organizations serving communities of underserved families.

Information about IDEA and project services have been distributed to the following organizations serving communities of underserved families.

Milwaukee Catalyst
Children's Hospital
Autism Society-SEW
We Indians
Family Service
Next Door Foundation
Youth Leadership Academy
Silver Spring Safety Services
Milwaukee Women's Center
Milwaukee County Wraparound
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
Special Needs Adoption Network
Blessed Trinity
UCP-SEW
POWER
ACTS
Start Smart
Independence First
Christian Liberty Church
In Their Best Interest
Waisman Center
NAMI-WI
Rethinking Schools

Goal #5. Obtain appropriate information about the range of options, programs, services and resources available to assist children with disabilities and their families;

Objective 5.1 To disseminate information to a minimum of 2500 parents, professionals and other individuals annually regarding disability issues, IDEA, school reform and other topics related through a variety of media.

During the three years of this project, information has been distributed to 12,192 parents, professionals and other individuals regarding IDEA and related disability issues. News article about our project appeared in the Milwaukee, and several disability organizations included articles about FACETS in their newsletters, such as Independence First, NAMI, etc.

Objective 5.2 To respond to 2400 requests annually for information, assistance, resources and referrals.

During the three years of this project, we have responded to 6725 requests for information, assistance, resources and referrals. While this number falls a bit short of our projected grant number, we feel we have achieved this goal. It has been difficult for staff to fall into the routine of recording every contact with a parent or other individuals. With staff training about the importance of accurate and timely data collection, we believe we will be able to meet this goal in our new grant without any difficulty.

Goal #6. Effectively participate in school reform activities.

Objective 6.1 To act as a community resource about school reform activities as it relates to children with disabilities.

WI FACETS enjoys a mutually respectful and collaborative relationship with key area organizations on school reform, Milwaukee Catalyst, Rethinking Schools and Institute for Wisconsin's Future. In fact, Rethinking Schools has plans to issues at least two issues devoted to children with disabilities and school reform. WI FACETS has been involved in setting the direction and tone of these future articles. (One is to be published sometime in and will focus on the upcoming IDEA reauthorization.) These three agencies have come to rely on FACETS for its input on school reform issues and its impact (if any) on the education of children with disabilities. The Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, our local newspaper, also relies on WI FACETS for input on issues relating to children with disabilities.

We have procured at least 15 items for use in our library on matters relating to school reform. They include such items as: Public Education in Milwaukee, Legislative Audit Bureau: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, The State of Charter Schools, etc.

We continue to refine our resource list of organizations, internet sources and clearing houses regarding school reform. This will be an on going activity of WI FACETS.

Objective 6.2 To increase the number of knowledgeable parents (5 per year) to serve as Parent Leaders in their local communities.

During the three years of this project, we have identified and trained fourteen parents as Parent Leaders. This has been one of the most satisfying projects of our project. We look forward to further development of our ability to mentor and train parent leaders. Some of the accomplishments of our first 14 Parent Leaders include:

- Glenda Johnson joined our staff as a Training Coordinator.
- Two parents presented a training series to parents of children with mental health issues. Both parents are establishing parent support groups in the 2001 year.
- Several parents have participated in local and state conferences with our assistance and support.
- Several parents have participated in a Leadership Skills series. This training has been jointly sponsored by Wisconsin Department of Public instruction and Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- One parent developed and presented trainings on transition to 67 parents and 76 students with disabilities.
- One parent started a support group for Latino parents of children with autism.

During the next three years, we will be looking for ways to continue to support this talented group of parents as well as ways to share their expertise with our newly identified group of Parent Leaders.

Objective 6.3 To provide a two day training on school reform for the Parent Leaders and other interested parties.

In our first year, we presented a two day training on school reform and children with disabilities. During years 2 and 3 of the project we collaborated with Milwaukee Catalyst and other organizations to jointly sponsor trainings and events around school reform issues focusing on discipline and assessments. While these trainings have not been specifically geared toward children with disabilities, it has been somewhat successful to collaborate with other Milwaukee area organizations on trainings that address the topic for school reform for all children. While we believe this goal has been met, we will address the need for specific trainings on school reform that focuses on the needs of children with disabilities in the year 2002.

Goal #7. Provide follow-up support for the educational programs of their children with disabilities

Objective 7.1 To provide individual consultation and follow-up support to parents about disability, IDEA-related, and service delivery issues.

During the three years of this project, individual consultation and follow-up support has been provided to 1630 families. This goal has been met.

Objective 7.2 To provide training to the Parent Leaders on how to support families in their community.

After our Parent Leaders have completed the basic series of trainings (Special Education and IEPs), they have participated in variety of trainings such as Leadership Skills, Rehabilitation Act, SSI, Section 504, Discipline Advocacy Techniques, etc. In addition, we have sponsored parents to attend conferences and trainings in the state, such Circles of Life Conference, Birth to Five Collaborative Conference, Vision for Tomorrow, Alliance Conference, Wisconsin Rehabilitation Conference, etc.

Project Implementation (Page 32 of grant)

1. List of products completed:

   a. Developed project brochure. Translations into Spanish are completed.
   b. Completed revision of IFSP workshop.
   c. Completed revision of mediation workshop. Developed workbook for parents and others involved in mediation.
   d. Completed Challenging Behaviors workshop. Work in progress for parent handouts and visuals.
   e. Work in progress in developing School Reform workshop.

2. Number of parents receiving services are quantified under each objective. Timelines and projections of parents served are on track. Total number of parents receiving project services from October 1, 1998 to September 30, 2001 is 8511.

3. Total number of parents from culturally diverse and underserved communities receiving project services from October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2001 is 5722. This reflects 67% of our total number of parents served.

4. Staff have relied on national clearinghouses such as NICHCY, NCAS, HEATH, etc. for up-to-date materials and resources for families. Staff, when appropriate, assist families in doing internet searches for specific information or issues, since many of our families do not have internet access.

5. WI FACETS provides a variety of services designed to meet the needs of families such as:

   a. Provides training to parents/caretakers of of children with disabilities who live in Milwaukee. Trainings are done in a variety of formats, group, one to one, and in a variety of locations such as libraries, churches, homes, etc. Topics are consistent with IDEA with a particular emphasis of the parent's role in assessment, IEP development, rights, due process, mediation, inclusive education and related disability awareness topics. A variety of materials are utilized to meet the literacy needs of the parents.

   b. WI FACETS encourages parents to use mediation or other informal means to resolve conflicts. WI FACETS is one the three partners in Wisconsin's Special Education Mediation System (WSEMS). Our role is to develop curriculum, provide trainings to parents and advocates, and to provide the parent perspective on training and curriculum development for the mediators. Staff have assisted 64 families in mediation with support, information, preparation and through actual mediation sessions.

c. WI FACETS services infants, toddlers children and youth with the full range of disabilities.

d. WI FACETS assists parents to understand the nature of their child's disabilities and their educational and developmental needs through support groups, telephone consultation, printed materials, audio/visual materials, home visits, neighborhood functions, school meetings, one-to one meetings, etc.

e. WI FACETS has consistently participated in school reform efforts on a local, state and national level, reflecting the perspective of parents of children with disabilities. Examples of areas in which this occurs include:

- Participation on various policy making committee within Milwaukee Public Schools.
- Participation on the State Special Education Council developing the state improvement plan.
- Participating on the state committee to make recommendations to reform state school funding system to the legislation.
- Participation in Milwaukee Catalyst examining the achievement levels of children attending Milwaukee Public Schools.
- Participation in Milwaukee Catalyst examining the suspension rates of students attending Milwaukee Public Schools.

6. WI FACETS utilizes the OSEP training curriculums and overheads (very much appreciated also!) as the basis for content of all workshops, parent handouts, trainings and presentations on IDEA 97.

Program Effectiveness

1. Potential recipients are informed of project services through newspaper articles, newsletters by other organizations, word of mouth in neighborhoods and communities, referrals from community based organizations, schools and other professionals, collaborative relationships with other organizations/groups serving underrepresented families, literature drops at libraries, direct mailings, participation in community events, exhibits, conferences, daycare centers, churches, welfare offices, etc.

2. Parent participation in the workshops account for 79% of the total participants. Parents account for 57% of the total number of contacts. Overall, the level of parent participation in trainings and contacts is 57%.

3. Total number of parents served reflect the full range of disabilities all socioeconomic levels and traditionally underserved populations.

4. After each workshop/training, the trainer and project director review the workshop evaluation forms to determine what adjustments are needed related to

content, format, materials, etc. Overall workshop evaluation scores from October 1, 1998 to September 2001 are 4.8 (out of 5). Most of the participants appreciated the handouts and the expertise of the presenter.

5. Total number of parents from culturally diverse and underserved communities receiving project services from October 1, 1998 to September 30, 2001 is 5722. This reflects 67% of our total number of parents served.

6. WI FACETS has collaborated with the following agencies:

Milwaukee Public Schools
Parent Education Project of Wisconsin
Native American Family Empowerment Project
Independence First
United Cerebral Palsy
Autism Society of Wisconsin
Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy
POWER
Milwaukee Catalyst
MICAH
Milwaukee County Wraparound
Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Wisconsin Special Education Mediation Project
Milwaukee Center for Independence
Family Services
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Independence First
Division for Vocational Rehabilitation

Impact

1.- 4. Average score from workshop evaluations are 4.8. WI FACETS has participated every year with the T.A. Alliance for data collection.

Some comments from the evaluation forms include:

"I learned things I didn't know before."
"Presented in a very easily understandable format."
"The wealth of information, not only from the speaker, but from the participants as well!"
"I learn more about IEPs and more information about IDEA and changes in Title 1 law."
"All parts were equally interesting and valuable."
"Meeting all the agency providers and networking with other parents with the common objectives continually all trying to meet the needs of the children."
"The support for parents, helped us know our rights."
"Very understandable, interesting and informative."

IV. Budget Information

The budget was completely expended within guidelines and as expected as per the grant.

V. Supplemental Information / Changes

In the three years of this grant, we have been amazed with what we have learned! We have watched our numbers increase and seen our center become credible within the African American and Hispanic communities. We have worked hard to become a resource to the community while offering our expertise and the shared experiences of the families with whom we provide services. And the families! I personally, after 17 years of advocacy experience, have learned so much from these diverse, colorful, compassionate families. I know we are making changes, offering hope and empowering the lives of our families. And in spite of the incredible challenges many of our families face on a daily basis, they are beginning to take their place as equal partners in developing and monitoring their child's education. Not only do I feel fortunate to have the incredible opportunity to continue these services for another three years, I am actually looking forward to it! We worked hard, (oh boy, did we work hard!) yet we had the best fun. And we get to do it all again! Thank you.

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